

Historic Preservation Commission
Annual Work Session
August 16, 2005

Item 1. Call to Order:

On Tuesday, August 16, 2005, the Round Rock Historic Preservation Commission met for their Annual Work Session in the Planning Back Conference Room located at 301 W. Bagdad, Suite 210. With a quorum present, Chairman Earl Palmer called the meeting to order at 5:30 p.m. Present were Commissioners Lynn Smith, David Crutchfield, and Gary Brown. Also attending the meeting were Joelle Jordan, Senior Planner and Armida C. McClure, Planning Technician. Guests attending were former Commissioners Robert Brinkman and Ellen Macaulay.

Item 2. Update Contact Information and Review Term Expiration Information

Changes were made accordingly to the information sheet.

Item 3. Appoint a Chair and Vice-Chairperson to the Commission

Chairman Palmer decided that due to health reasons he will not be able to serve as chairman but plans to finish out his term as Commissioner. He asked for nominations for Chairman and Vice-Chairman. Commissioner Smith stated that she is going to stay in town for a while longer however, the possibility of her moving is still there but she does not know when yet.

Motion: Commissioner Crutchfield made a motion to nominate Commissioner Brown for Chairman and Commissioner Smith for Vice-Chairperson of the Historic Preservation Commission for 2005-2006. Commissioner Smith seconded the motion

Vote:	Ayes:	Earl Palmer Lynn Smith David Crutchfield Gary Brown
	Noes:	None
	Non-Voting:	David Conrad, Alternate
	Absent:	Billy Huggins David Conrad
	Abstain:	None
	Action:	Motion carried

Item 4. Presentation on Historic Properties Database

Ms. Jordan presented the completed database of Historic Properties. It was completed with a CLG grant which allowed the City to hire someone to develop the database. It went live this month when everything was incorporated into it. It includes a breakdown of the properties with addresses, legal descriptions and contact information, which is linked with the Williamson Appraisal District for updating when the properties change ownership. Recent photos are included along with other photos relating to the property, and any correspondence regarding that piece of property. Tax abatement information is also included for each year. There is also a section that allows for notes on any changes to the property. All the properties in the database can be found by searching by name or address.

The Commission viewed the database on-line through a laptop computer provided by Ms. Jordan. Vice-Chairperson Smith stated that it looks very good and thanked Ms. Jordan for incorporating the Commission's suggestions from last year's work session. The database was more efficient than having to go to the ordinances for information and it can grow as time goes by. Ms. Jordan showed the Commissioners how the additional photos and information could be accessed in the database.

**Item 5. Designated Properties:
5A. Discussion of Implications to Historic Zoning and Partial Tax
Exemption Program when a New Addition is Added to A
Historic Building or Site.**

Ms. Jordan has several issues she wanted to get input on from the Commission. The City has had several instances this year where there have been different issues that have come up that have not come before, including differentiating when a tax exemption applies to only a portion of a property, when a historic designation only applies to a portion of a property, and how to classify a property where an addition is added to an existing structure with historic zoning. Several maps were included in the Commissioner's packets to use as a reference.

The first example Ms. Jordan had was 901 Round Rock Avenue. Originally, the entire site had historic zoning. At some point the overlay was removed on all but one part of the site (just the stagecoach part). The owner only gets a tax exemption on the portion that is designated. That is an example of the property changing designation and receiving a tax abatement on only a portion of the property. The second example is 400 West Main. It includes five lots and it has an original building plus an addition (L-shaped building), and it also has a stone building in the center

of the site. This has historic zoning on all five lots; however; the owner has only been receiving a partial tax exemption on the original building and not the addition. This year that was corrected because the owner came forward and noted that there are not other examples in the City where this is occurring. Vice-Chairperson Smith wanted to know what the status of the property is now. Ms. Jordan stated that currently the owner has historic zoning on all five lots and in 2005 received a tax exemption on the whole property. Commissioner Palmer asked whether the owner initially got approval from the Commission for the addition.

The next examples are for upcoming additions: 104 E. Main and 114 E. Main Street. For both properties there is historical zoning on the whole lots. They are planning additions and the historic overlay would still be on the whole site, so the question is whether to get the tax exemption on 100% the property. Mr. Brinkman commented that because the County sees it as one lot, it assumes the exemption is on the whole lot. In the case of the 400 W. Main, at some point in time there was a request to the County to only have the property owner receive a portion of the tax exemption. There is a note in the file but no documentation stating why this was the case. The purpose of the discussion tonight is to decide the best policy to follow so that the tax exemption can be applied uniformly. Properties like the ones downtown that are proposing additions still have to come in and go through the process of getting approval for their additions. The Commission approved the addition under the historic zoning so it would seem that if that was approved, it would also be eligible for the historic tax exemption on that entire property. Commissioner Palmer suggested that this is a topic for the City Council to discuss because it is a financial issue. Vice-Chairperson Smith agreed. Ms. Jordan remarked that if the Commission was to consider only applying the historic tax exemption to a portion of a property, Ms. Jordan believes the Commission would have to remove the historic zoning from the newer portion of the building or site. Mr. Brinkman stated that then the property would need to be resurveyed. Ms. Jordan commented that there would be costs associated with doing that. Currently, the amount that is exempted overall by the program is about \$35,000 per year. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that depending on what the tax break is, the City is going to gain by not having an exemption on the property. Commissioner Crutchfield stated that they could tell an applicant if they want to still maintain their historic status, then they need to resurvey. Chairman Brown commented that this is a loophole that needs to be corrected. As it stands today someone can increase their entire property value and have it qualify for historic tax exemption. Commissioner Palmer stated that if you

have an existing building, and it is historic and you add a piece to it, to let that piece be covered because its still one continuous building. Vice-Chairperson Smith asked if the Commission could require a condition that they would have to resurvey the site so is it separate parcels? One possibility could be that the Commission would recommend that if the applicant pays to survey the historic part as a separate parcel, then the applicant can get a tax exemption on the portion of parcel with the historic original buildings and rezone the other part of the parcel to remove the historic overlay.

Ms. Jordan clarified a few things. If you were to demolish a historic building, you would lose the zoning so there would never be a case where an entire new construction would have historic zoning that would get a tax exemption. Chairman Brown asked what would happen if most of a building were demolished then a new four story building were built right next to it. By definition then, is it still a historic property? Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that maybe the Commission should ask for it to be two separate lots not just one. Ms. Jordan suggests that if the Commission is going to require surveying be done, Staff will need to consult the legal department to see how the ordinance should be amended. Vice-Chairperson Smith stated that they need more information from the legal department before a decision can be made. Mr. Brinkman suggested saying that once you get to a certain size of addition, changes to the portion designated could occur.

Ms. Jordan stated that there are two examples in the City where just a portion of the lot has historic overlay. One was 1000 E. Main, which does not exist anymore; the original out-building had historic zoning before it was demolished. The other one is 901 Round Rock Ave. Commissioner Crutchfield asked if there was an instance where the overlay was the incentive to keep a building. Ms. Jordan stated that the main purpose of historic overlay is to protect buildings. However, City ordinance states if a property owner wants to demolish a building, they have to wait 120 days, and then a demolition permit may be issued at that time. The idea being that someone can come forward during that time and offer to purchase the property to restore it. Vice-Chairperson Smith suggested the guideline could be if an addition is more than the square footage of the existing historic property, then the property owner has to resurvey and forfeit the historic zoning on the part of the new portion that is greater than double the existing building. Anything that overwhelms the scale of the original building is a problem. Commissioner Palmer mentioned the Agape building may be one of those examples. Mr. Brinkman commented

that the addition will really changed the whole back of the building. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that it maybe okay since it is only the back view, and not the front façade.

Vice-Chairman Smith commented that it gets complicated because an addition could be more than one story and permissible percentage would depend on whether the addition was visible from across the street from the front façade. Ms. Jordan stated that would apply to the L-shaped building at 400 W. Main Street. -Vice-Chairman Smith stated that it still may have been too big. Ms. Jordan stated it is important to consider how an addition blends the new with the old. Vice-Chairperson Smith stated that she thought the project did protect the integrity of the existing house. Mr. Brinkman commented that taking it point by point, it is still the same problem. The program exempts \$35,000 in taxes and maybe a few projects do not warrant a change in policy. It a risk City Council will have to decide they want to take. A developer could come in and add on to other properties in the future.

Ms. Jordan summarized that she thought the Commission agreed for now that the additions that are proposed downtown would continue to be eligible for tax exemption. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that she would tend to side that way because a project would have to receive approval from the Commission. In addition, they are making an investment in the property which is going to make them maintain the façade which is going to help downtown Round Rock and ultimately help the historic character of Round Rock.

Ms. Jordan commented that this discussion was a good starting point. These issues came to light all in just the past six months. Vice-Chairperson Smith stated that the Commission has design guidelines that talk about the scale of additions. Ms. Jordan stated that if a property owner were to do an addition that was inappropriate and deemed inappropriate by the Commission, then the Commission could remove the historic overlay on part or all of it.

Chairman Brown mentioned the stagecoach part on 901 Round Rock was mostly destroyed when Gumbo's came in. It used to be a neat property back when it was a B-B-Q place. Since then aluminum windows, have been added and in the 90s, and the Gumbos in 90's took it over and took off the roof all the windows. Someone turned them in and they forfeited their state designation but kept its local designation.

Chairman Brown commented that the problem that the Commission is facing is defining what is historical and what is not. Because as time evolves the historical character gets destroyed by new construction. Some buildings are called historic even when a majority of their historic integrity has been lost. In addition, many truly historic buildings are not designated. People do not want to go through the process involved with historic designation. There are some historic buildings on Chisholm Trail which have not been designated. Vice-Chairperson Smith reminded the Commission to think about whether there is anything significant enough telling the history of this place, and if there is not, then a building it is just old.

Ms. Jordan summarized that from further discussion whether something is appropriate or not needs to be kept in mind as the Commission is reviewing a project, like they did with the property on Main Street where the owner was wanting local historic designation but whether or not it will be approved will depend on what the proposed addition looks like. Commissioner Crutchfield stated that the Commission needs to keep in mind the percentages of historic property affected as part of the discussion.

5B. Discussion of Nomination of Properties for Local Designation.

Ms. Jordan commented that one goal of the Commission has been to designate five new properties every year, but none have been added in the past few years. Mr. Brinkman suggested that if anyone comes forward that is remotely historic, the Commission should consider them for designation if they are pre-1970 or close. Commissioner Crutchfield asked whether there are there any houses which could be used for a museum. Commissioner Brown asked about any Sears homes that came out of the Sears catalog similar that would be examples of something historic. Vice-Chairperson Smith stated as long as buildings are intact. Chairman Brown stated that the old Telander stone house is a perfect example of a great historic house which was built around the 1870's and yet it is not designated. Vice-Chairman Smith asked what the story is behind the Texas Baptist Children's Home. Commissioner Palmer stated that it was built around 1950. Vice Chairman Smith commented that the building is 55 years old. The whole complex has a very distinctive look. The Commission agreed. The original buildings are important to the history of Round Rock. Chairman Brown added that there are several churches with historic value to Round Rock like the Palm Valley Church. Commissioner Crutchfield asked about the acquisition of land annexed

into the City in the last fifty years and if it brought in any old buildings. Ms. Jordan commented that a designated historic property must be in the City limits.

Commissioner Crutchfield stated that the woman proposing a project for the slave cemetery has not come in to see the Commission. Chairman Brown stated that all of those old cemeteries should be fair game for designation. There are four of them in the City limits. The cemetery at Palm Valley is eligible for the National Registry. The Palm Valley Church has been altered many times. Commissioner Palmer stated that the main church has not been altered at all.

Commissioner Crutchfield informed the Commission that those churches are tax exempt so he had concern as to whether there is an incentive for them to be designated. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that it could be a big help if someone wanted to put a road through them or something, because the Commission could have a good chance of changing minds because of the designation. Mr. Brinkman reminded the Commission that the railroad tracks wanted to plow right through the church one time already. Ms. Jordan stated that the City does not currently have any Round Rock cemeteries designated, but they are zoned so a historic overlay could be added. Ms. Jordan will check on the status of Palm Valley Church and Cemetery being in the City limits or not. Ms. Jordan commented that the Commission needs to think about downtown and other buildings and approach property owners. Chairman Brown spoke about the Masonic organization being one of the oldest organizations in Round Rock. Mr. Brinkman commented that the one good thing about establishing a residential district is that you can scoop up halfway good bungalows. There is an on again off again effort to do a National Register District of residences downtown, but it could be a local district first. Ms. Jordan asked if there are boundaries in mind. Mr. Brinkman thought the 1912 City boundaries, Lake Creek to Brushy Creek and Main to the Trinity College would be appropriate. But, for the National Register, you can pick up anything that is 50 years old, sometimes even 45 years old. An example would be Sunset Drive that has many intact single family homes from the fifties. Chairman Brown stated that there may be potential for a district on Chisholm Trail along the creek to the warehouses. Chairman Brown will research the information. Mr. Brinkman suggested that they could connect old and new Round Rock. Ms. Jordan asked if that meant anyone who wanted to make a change to their property would have to come before the Commission. Mr. Brinkman stated that all buildings in a district could be designated that are pre-1950 at the local level parallel

with a National Register District, and then the Commission could identify which structures are contributing.

Commissioner Crutchfield mentioned that you could state which ones are eligible for tax breaks and which ones are not. Mr. Brinkman suggested that though a building may have some changes it does not mean it can't be recovered and considered to be contributing. Ms. Jordan asked if there had been any efforts to do a residential designation. Mr. Brinkman stated that there have been very weak efforts, but that it would not take very much to get it done.

Mr. Brinkman commented that he had taken his boss through downtown one-and a half years ago, and he thought there was potential for a residential district. He thought 50 percent would be contributing.

Chairman Brown mentioned the old barns up on the hill, and that he was going to get the addresses of them. Off of Main there are old barns back there, and they have been there at least 50 years and probably close to 80 years. Mr. Brinkman mentioned a place one street from the cemetery on 620 straight back where an old building stands. He last looked at it ten years ago, and it is still there. The Commission needs to get information on them. It looks like an old school house. It is a rare thing. Ms. Jordan questioned who could do the research and the cost involved for designation. Mr. Brinkman asked what happened to the two women who were from out of town that have a house on Rabbit Run. The ladies inquiring were supposed to come back with addition information and they have not yet. Mr. Brinkman commented that if they do come up again to make sure and get the addresses and legal description of the properties in question for the designation. Ms. Jordan explained to Commissioner Crutchfield that after the request from a property owner for designation, then information needs to be gathered from the owner for the designation. Then the process is similar to any other zoning including public hearings and recommendation by the Planning and Zoning Commission and the City Council. Typically, if a citizen wants to rezone their property they would submit an application and pay five hundred dollars and the Commission is not asking them to do that. All the Commission wants to for them to supply the information on the property to be considered for a historic overlay.

Item 6. Develop Historic Preservation Commission (HPC) Goals for 2005-2006

Ms. Jordan asked for any changes to the goals. Vice-Chairperson Smith asked if the sign ordinance has been revised, and Ms. Jordan informed the

Commission that Staff is now beginning the revision process. Chairman Brown asked Ms. Jordan about the wooden house across from Chase Bank on Chisholm Trail where a massage place just moved in, and he wanted to confirm that the house is historic. Ms. Jordan responded that it has historic zoning. Chairman Brown was asking whether their banner which they have up should have been approved by the Commission. Ms. Jordan replied that the business had contacted her. The City is in the process of permitting a sign. Signs are reviewed administratively for compliance with the historic sign ordinance.

Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that the first goal to talk about is #2, the third bullet down which reads as follows: "Continue participation in the Round Rock Leader column entitled "Time Capsule" and submit press releases on topics of interest" Mr. Brinkman answered that he is still submitting for the "Time Capsule". Ms. Jordan commented that new designations would provide opportunities to submit press releases.

Vice-Chairperson Smith asked if it was feasible for people to come in and have historic photos scanned. Ms. Jordan mentioned that people like the Campbells with their attic full of photos would be great candidates. Commissioner Palmer recalled the box of pictures that he brought to Ms. Jordan a while back and that the many of them were not identifiable. Unless they were in the Round Rock USA, we would not know who they were. There were about 300 to 400 pictures in that box alone. Chairman Brown suggested that it would be a great thing to have in the newspaper, asking the public to identify the people in the photo.

Vice-Chairperson Smith noted #3 first bullet "Update the current driving and walking tours and make them available to the public at the Chamber of Commerce, Downtown events, and Visitor's Bureau information sites in the City". Ms. Jordan commented that the City applied for a CLG grant last year and did not receive it because of some issues with the funding. The application was resubmitted this past July and staff should be notified in November 2005. The update could be started next year if approved. Commissioner Palmer stated that the City already has one walking tour which is the Ghost Tour. If the City gets this grant, there would be money to hire a consultant to design a brochure. The existing brochure is very old, and it needs updating. Ms. Jordan will keep the Commission posted on the status of the grant application.

Chairman Brown asked about the Old Settlers Park being included in the driving tour. Vice-Chairperson Smith agreed and added that it would tie

in well with goal #4. The local sportsmen could be included and Mr. Brinkman mentioned track men from 1940s horse racing. Commissioner Palmer was remembering the old baseball teams that would come together to provide great times for the people of the town. Jack Madsen would be a great contact for information and Mark Gold for the 1970s. Don Hester also played ball here about 40 years ago. He was in school in the fifties.

Ms. Jordan asked about the changes the Commission wanted to make to the goals so that they could be voted on at the next meeting.

Commissioner Palmer stated that one of the projects he wants to see completed is the Baylor Memorial Park. Mr. David Kautz told Commissioner Palmer that the City needs to determine where the detention pond will be located on the piece of property before the location of the memorial can be determined. Ms. Jordan stated this land is already owned by the City and will be maintained by the City. Mr. Brinkman announced that there will be a monthly speaker series about Baylor in January 2006 at the Library. Ms. Macaulay stated that her contact with Baylor is also trying to complete a Memorial at the University, so the participation monies are still in question from both sides.

Vice-Chairperson Smith suggested that one of things that is challenging about the goals is that there are so many goals. One solution might be to prioritize. Ms. Jordan suggested five priority goals. Vice-Chairperson Smith agreed that was something that the Commission may be able to achieve. Ms. Jordan reminded the Commission that they really have only four main goals, and the items listed under them are the tasks they would like to accomplish to meet those goals. Mr. Brinkman suggested picking one item under each goal to prioritize for example, add more properties for designation. Some of the tasks that Commissioners felt were priorities included: Interaction with the public and scanning project; The walking driving tour brochure; Baylor Memorial Park; and the Downtown Markers. Mr. Brinkman suggested that each of Commissioners take one of these priorities. Commissioner Palmer volunteered to work on the Baylor Memorial Park, Ms. Jordan will do the walking and driving tour, Commissioner Huggins was assigned to do the research on the downtown markers. Mr. Brinkman suggested the he will be around to help. Vice-Chairperson Smith will look into adding historic designations to properties. Commissioner Crutchfield would be good for the public information officer role, overseeing submittals to the newspaper and website content. Mr. Brinkman suggested for him to include scanning of historic photos. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented that they just bought

a new printer for scanning which could probably be used for the black and white pictures.

Ms. Jordan asked if there were anymore changes or the language to the goals, and there were no further comments by the Commission.

Item 7. Discussion of Possible Changes and Updates to the City of Round Rock Website for HPC Pages and Content

This item was also discussed at the work session last year or the year before. Ms. Jordan wanted to see if the Commission had any changes to the content. There is going to be an upcoming redesign to the City site but not the information on the pages. The public looking for information has not complained about not finding what they needed on-line. The website page also include the Round Rock Collection and the Commission's Mission statement. Commissioner Crutchfield asked if there were going to be more tools added to it and will they be able to manipulate the information as needed. Ms Jordan stated that the redesign is going to be more database-based technology. Commissioner Crutchfield was curious as to its potential. Ms. Jordan mentioned that she might want to add a modified version of historic properties database to the website. Chairman Palmer wanted to know if any more of the paperback publications of the Round Rock history were ever printed. Mr. Brinkman stated that every school library should have them by now.

Item 8. Discussion on Historic Markers in Round Rock's Downtown and in the National Register District

Ms. Jordan talked about how someone had come to her and asked about markers downtown. Even if it is something that involves fund raising or is an educational marker. Mr. Brinkman reminded the Commission that the Texas Historical Commission allows for the design of local markers for locally designated properties. Ms. Jordan stated that if they have state designation, the state provides their marker. Mr. Brinkman commented how not every property has state designation, so lots of properties do not have markers. Ms. Jordan commented that the questions are: what would the Commission like to do, where would the money come from, and what will be on the marker. Vice-Chairperson Smith commented about the marker talking about Old Round Rock but that there is no marker downtown talking about New Town. Ms. Jordan added that a new marker could be located in a planting bed downtown.

Item 9. Update by Planning and Community Development Department on Status of Certified Local Government Grant Application

Ms. Jordan mentioned again that the City had applied for a Certified Local Government Grant. The grant could provide about \$8,500.00 to hire a photographer and graphic artist to update the historic walking and driving tour brochure. Chairman Brown asked about the Hill Country Trails Region. Ms. Jordan informed the Commission that the Trail was established so there will be a forthcoming brochure. Ms. Jordan mentioned that Round Rock is also part of the Brazos Region. Ms. Jordan mentioned there may be additional grants available from the trails program, but they require matching City funds, so it takes a couple of years to budget for these items.

Item 10. Planners Report and Commissioners Comments

Ms. Jordan said she received an email that the City of Plano is hosting a Commission Assistance and Mentoring Workshop. The Commissioners will look at their calendars and let Ms. Jordan know whether they would be interested in attending. The City could probably send two Commissioners.

Item 11. Adjournment

Hearing no further discussion or comments, Chairman Brown adjourned the meeting at 7:52 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,

Armida C. McClure
Planner Technician